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Courtesy of the Weyhe Galleries, New York

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AUTHORS IN THIS ISSUE

ALICE SUTTON, author of "Portraits by Pontormo," concentrated while she was at Radcliffe in the history of art, with special emphasis on Italian painting, and received her degree in 1928, after which she supplemented theory with practice by means of three years' study of drawing and painting at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Knowledge of European galleries has broadened her understanding of the arts. She still continues to paint, although entirely landscapes, and is now Mrs. George B. Bacon.

WILLIAM SCHACK has written extensively on art subjects, for *The Arts*, *Creative Art*, *Menorah Journal*, *Architectural Forum*, and so forth. He is associated with the New York Times Drama Department and has contributed also to other metropolitan newspapers and to general magazines such as the *Forum* and *Current History* on current affairs. He has been a teacher at Cornell and the editor of several industrial and fashion publications. His rather extensive repertoire includes also several plays adapted for Broadway, verse, essays, and novels.

DOROTHY MEIGS EIDLITZ tells us that she is embarrassed because an orderly perusal of her life has failed to account for her unpremeditated rise as an "authority" on the subject of Japanese flower arrangement. However, in our opinion, it does produce at least a familiarity with the subject. Vassar gave her an A.B. in 1914, along with the idea that it wasn't earned unless she was out for a life of "service." The service took the form of sociology and social work in general until in 1920 she went to Japan as the wife of a Swiss research chemist, where for four years she was part of the English-speaking colony in Kobe. As a part of her study of Japanese language and culture, she had weekly lessons in flower arrangement by native flower-masters, but she says that she did not appreciate the universality of the principles involved until she returned to this country in 1924. Since then she has studied art and aesthetics—as well as psychology, anthropology, and international relations—at Columbia and the New School for Social Research. She states that she is now planning to revel in the considered use of the leisure to which she is entitled under the New Deal.



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PONTORMO: AN ENGRAVER OF PRECIOUS STONES
LOUVRE MUSEUM, PARIS

*The American
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September 1934

ANOTHER LANGUAGE

THERE are so very many things that we know only through hearsay or the written word that we seldom are forced to make an effort to face them in reality. We read about murders and earthquakes and we hear how little Johnny fell off the second-story porch. At one remove horrors lose their horror; at one remove, also, joys become less satisfying than creature comforts and the wildest adventures become fire-side boredom. So it is with art; the second-hand opinion may be calmly accepted whereas the strange work of art really confronted is a very different matter.

We are all so used to our native language, to hearing and speaking and reading it, that the familiarity of the vehicle tends to rub the first bloom off ideas that come to us by its means. And as the bloom wears off, our interest wanes and we accept more or less automatically what we are lulled into accepting. There is a danger in the very commonness of language which presents definite problems to the artist who works in it. But how much more difficult must it not be for the artist who works in other media and yet must somewhat depend for interpretation on the translations, and often roughly inaccurate ones, of art commentators!

After all we are born to our native tongue. One of our first efforts is to communicate our needs in terms of sound. Gradually these sounds take the form of English or Russian or Zulu (depending on who we are) and little by little we learn the ways of speech. Later we may even learn other languages, first in terms of our own, then in their own terms. As it is with speech so it is with other forms of communication. We have other organs than tongues, other senses than hearing and the world is much bigger than a dictionary. We owe it to ourselves, if not to each other, to extend our familiarity to still other languages, even those that have different patterns and different purposes than the one our earliest necessities force upon us.

It is a matter of reaching out, gropingly at first, perhaps, but with slowly increasing assurance. The start is not easy. The very desire for security, the wish to be undisturbed, the animal laziness of self-preservation, make it hard for us to recognize the need for an extension of our experience. Yet, security in a moving world can only be gained through motion. When old experience fails us, when an old language goes even temporarily dead, we must push out our old limits. At times this growth naturally compels us to take the perilous step of learning another language. We cease to find vicarious living satisfactory; we face reality.

As far as art is concerned, and that is the chief concern of this editorial, we shall find more at the museums and the galleries and at home if we once accept the truth that we must learn the new languages of the arts. When we begin, even, to discover

that pictures are to be understood in pictorial terms and that sculpture speaks in sculptural terms we have gained contact with a new continent and are potentially, at least, on equal terms with the artists that have settled there. We must learn to see not only in terms of the flat printed page, but also in terms of the objects we are looking at for ourselves. And this proposal is perfectly acceptable as it lies here harmlessly on the page of a magazine. How will it seem when you are confronted by a dancing figure of Siva on your next visit to a museum? Here is the thing itself, you will say, but there are so many unfamiliarities in the way.

In this one instance there is much to make clear, unprejudiced vision difficult. Here is an unfamiliar god, here is an abstruse symbolism, here is a strange attitude of body that must express a strange attitude of mind. How unlike are its distortions from the ones we so easily accept in Michelangelo. We see first the differences and they bring to mind all manner of irrelevances: the "untouchables," the caste system, the place of women in Indian society, heathens in general. We are preoccupied with things we have read and heard (and find hard to understand). But these bits of rather nebulous gossip, as well as beclouding the real issue, give us very good excuses for restricting our own efforts really to see.

Just as the discipline, which artists must accept as part of the labor of creation, helps rather than hinders them, so the discipline we must accept as essential in approaching the finished product will be our greatest aid in seeing clearly and more and more completely. Since we live in a somewhat analytical age, we have a right to expect that we can separate our thoughts on seeing a work of art, and use only those which are really pertinent to the occasion. With a sound central core discovered we can go on to find out about the god called Siva, the people who worship him, and how the artist of that race lives and works. But the increasing knowledge will not take away our conviction that what we have looked at (and seen) is a beautiful expression in *sculptural* terms. One thing that cannot be taken away from us is our real experience.

Yet, if one work of art presents so many troubles, what shall we expect of others? More troubles; but as we go on, fewer troubles. These barriers to quick understanding have a way of heightening our interest and once our interest is genuinely aroused we shall grow more adaptable. Then we can come back to the written word and the spoken word with actual experience to use in testing the value of this second-hand knowledge. We shall not be so readily fooled or bored by the frequently misleading translations, into the old familiar words, of arts that use the new language. For we have not forgotten one language while beginning to learn another. Only the artists, and not all of them, manage the mastery of a new set of symbols. Yet, once we recognize the validity of their language and the rudiments of its grammar and the hugeness of its vocabulary, we can begin to hold up our end of the intercommunication on soundly common ground. It ought to be a relief all around.

PORTRAITS BY PONTORMO

By ALICE SUTTON

IN the year 1530, we have strong reason to believe, Pontormo met Michelangelo in Florence. On the face of it, this statement seems harmless enough. But is it too much to say that but for this meeting the story of the Florentine School in the sixteenth century might have run quite a different course? In Pontormo we have the less forceful personality, conscious that the Florentine Renaissance had taught the world to solve the problems of perspective and foreshortening, and also by this time aware that for him mere natural representation, even with the added decorative elements, was not the ultimate objective of art. Michelangelo had triumphantly and overwhelmingly demonstrated this truth when in 1512 he completed the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. But it remained for Pontormo to display his own manifesto. Already a great admirer of Michelangelo, he had so far consciously avoided the pitfall of completely subjecting himself to the power of this assertive genius. How different therefore would the outcome have been if Michelangelo had not become Pontormo's friend in the year 1530, and kept him for fifteen years under the spell of his later style?

To remind us that Pontormo's life and work warrants him today so much consideration, let us return to the time when he first came to Florence, about 1503. In the early sixteenth century the city was torn by constant strife, its revolutionary democratic elements waging a losing battle against the encroaching domination of the Medicean rulers. Unwillingly deprived of its liberty, Florence was not likely to produce serene or grandiloquent art. Nor was the increasingly powerful influence already exerted by Michelangelo and his "canon of form" bound to further the originality of the less gifted painters of that generation. This then was the unpropitious scene when young Jacopo Carucci, called Il Pontormo from his birthplace, apprenticed himself to Albertinelli. Before he was sixteen he had also had for masters the great Leonardo and Andrea del Sarto. That his early work shows distinct borrow-

ings from all these men is undeniably true.

Leonardo's influence upon so eager and gifted a student, so impressionable and sensitive an individual, is bound to be interesting. Could it be that he passed on to his pupil at this time the definition of painting written in his own *Tractate on Painting*? Did Pontormo learn from him that great maxim of portraiture: "that painting is greatest which through the postures of the body shows the emotions of the soul"? If he did, Pontormo remembered it all his life—the San Lorenzo choir is a violent example of this kind of expression, but a much finer one is the "Portrait of Cosimo de Medici." One cannot help wondering why Pontormo was not more affected by the soft light and mysterious shadows of Leonardo's chiaroscuro. Perhaps his own native talent as a draughtsman caused him to refuse to rely for long on black shadows in rendering three-dimensional form, or perhaps Andrea del Sarto's more lucid and richly pigmented shadows appealed to his color sense.

In Pontormo's first known portrait, dating from 1516, the "Engraver of Precious Stones," the derivation of the chiaroscuro is obvious. But Andrea's influence is here, too, in the naturalness of the pose. From him Pontormo quite possibly learned to set his subjects against the typical river valley landscape, a survival of the fifteenth-century portrait settings. Raphael also in his "Maddalena Doni" used a landscape setting, only to change later, but at a maturer age than Pontormo, to a simpler background in the "Portrait of Count Baldassare Castiglione." This last is of about the same date as the "Engraver of Precious Stones." But how much more Raphael, in his "Maddalena Doni," is indebted to Leonardo than is Pontormo in this likeness! One may well suppose, then, that at the age of twenty Pontormo showed more strength as an artistic personality in withstanding the direct influence of Leonardo than Raphael at a similar stage of growth and with less intimate contact.

If at this age Pontormo's religious pieces show a fondness for chiaroscuro, pyramidal

composition, and Leonardesque smiling faces, his portraits already begin to take on his own distinctive stamp. A born interpreter of character, he loses himself in the study of his sitter, only to benefit from his absorption by unconsciously producing, besides a faithful likeness, a painting bearing the mark of his own artistic personality. The melancholy brooding of the eyes in the engraver's portrait is a new departure in Renaissance portraiture. Is this his own way of expressing "through the postures of the body the emotions of the soul"?

From here the logical step in development would lead to the consummate expression of so keen a psychological observer in the "Portrait of Cosimo de Medici." But other influences were at work in Florence. Michelangelo's early style was already influencing his native city. We know Pontormo admired his drawings and had recently drawn from his cartoon for the "Battle of Cascina." Thus the "Portrait of a Youth" of about 1518 uses the heroic proportions that Michelangelo introduced; it also shows the Leonardesque *chiaroscuro* to be waning: Pontormo is now substituting with increasing self-assurance a conception of form based on draughtsmanship rather than marked light and shadow, and is painting his canvas with richer colors and a more turgid brush.

Yet for discernment of character this panel cannot compare with the "Portrait of Cosimo de Medici." This latter likeness may well be interpreted as the culmination of Leonardo's precept of painting as applied to portraiture. But in what different terms would Leonardo have conceived it!

However, if Leonardo's precepts aided Pontormo to find himself as a portraitist, Michelangelo was to become his artistic Nemesis. While Pontormo was winning new laurels for himself as a decorator at Poggio a Cajano in 1520, Florence was definitely approaching in matters artistic as well as political a complete and absolute tyranny. The influence of Michelangelo's early style had been strongly felt and when in 1523 he returned home and began to sculpture his huge nudes for the Medici Tombs in the Sacristy of San Lorenzo he literally became the artistic despot of the city. His dominating genius completely overwhelmed the lesser men of his day. So the sensitive Pontormo, who had just discovered his own po-

tentialities, appears instinctively to have recognized that to follow the crowd was but to ape feebly the conceptions of a superb artist whose real greatness was not transferable. Was it not his very fear of being deterred from his own course which led him to revolt so ardently that his new ideals were far afield and did not foster his own talents?

In the work of Albrecht Dürer, Pontormo tries to seek fresh stimulus, but his conception of form is little changed by this contact. His lines gyrate as in a woodcut, but only occasionally become charged with the feeling found in the "Deposition," of 1526. Here, happily, the figures by their movements unite with the linear qualities of the picture to express a genuine and tragic pathos.

The portraits that follow show that in this sphere Pontormo maintained his artistic identity. The Uffizi "Portrait of a Man," dating before 1530, shows him so absorbed in his subject that once again his mental conception is direct and intuitive as his hand records likenesses simply and beautifully spaced, exquisite in painting, and unconsciously thoughtful and gentle in spirit.

Thus, just when Pontormo, chiefly in his portraits, was again expressing his own artistic ideals, came that almost fatal meeting with Michelangelo in 1530. Before a direct contact with the artistic Titan of centuries even the genius of Raphael had quailed. Could we therefore expect Pontormo, who deeply admired and dreaded his artistic strength, to fare differently? Fortunately for his name as a portraitist, it is not this side of Pontormo's art that is altered. The sketches for the Medicean Loggis at Castello are full of large-proportioned nudes, lifeless and unnatural, so warped can ideals become when under repressing influence. Yet between 1534 and 1535 the "Portrait of Alessandro de Medici" finds Pontormo once more in command of himself. He retains the Michelangelesque proportions, but they are those of the earlier style and heighten rather than mar the effect of noble dignity. Another characterization is the magnificent "Portrait of an Halberdier," stalwart in figure and introspective in mood. It is not too much to say that in these last panels we are distinctly approaching the field of modern portraiture. They have no lack of technical proficiency;



PONTORMO: PORTRAIT OF A YOUTH
PALAZZO BIANCO, GENOA



PONTORMO: PORTRAIT OF A MAN
UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE



PONTORMO: PORTRAIT OF COSIMO DE MEDICI
UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE

their representation of form and design is as completely acceptable as their psychological import is wholly understandable.

If these lead the way to modern portraiture they also show Pontormo nearing the crest of his powers. The high point is reached in a group of feminine portraits painted between 1534 and 1540, which deservedly rank among the finest creations by Florentine masters. As among these last we cite the "Lady with a Carnation Hung Over Her Ear." Then, as today, overemphasized elegance is a dubious compliment to pay any sitter and Pontormo, realizing this, relies on distinctive personalities to betray a more genuine aristocracy. Here his sheer technique and the vigorous ease of his liquid painting also strongly enhance his reputation. In turning from these engaging faces to Pontormo's other work, who cannot perceive a marked contrast? The tapestries he designed in the Quirinal Palace, Rome, show him still laboring with the Michelangelesque tradition, his conception of Biblical subjects dry and devitalized. But when, soon after 1540, he painted the "Portrait of Bartholommeo Compagni," and the equally fine "Cardinal Spannocchi Cervini," he obviously did not follow slavishly any preconceived canon. In both the execution curiously suggests the technique of some of our modern *surréalists*. The natural and scrupulously exact painting of still life objects in the background of the former and the table cover in the Cardinal's portrait show a meticulous workmanship often evident in modern galleries. With such a technique and an essentially modern point of view, why did Pontormo not venture further? Is it again his awareness of other influences that daunts him?

As Pontormo reaches his fifty-first year he at length frees himself from his Michelangelesque obsessions and finds an entirely original idea—emotional design. It is not impossible that the remembered precepts of Leonardo prompted him at this late date. That his new aim is as definitely expressionistic as that of El Greco, who lived two generations later, or the expressionist group of today, is obvious. In the sketches for the choir of San Lorenzo he avoids naturalism, but seeks new and expressive rhythms for his great figures. Turning from this much overlooked aspect of his achievements to his last work in portraiture

what do we find? With a mature and searching vision his work remains consistent. He may depart from reality at San Lorenzo, but in the presence of the sitter he is again the sensitive interpreter. Perhaps his own advancing years made him understand so completely the dignity of age in his "Portrait of an Old Lady" which he painted in the years between 1545 and 1557.

Pontormo never realized to their full extent his new ideals as an expressionist, for he died in 1549, leaving to his pupil, Bronzino, the completion of the San Lorenzo Choir. If he had lived longer could he have produced greater portraits than those we have today? An affirmative answer is doubtful. For while his intuitive nature and gift for sympathetic observation were the very best of qualifications for a portraitist, they distinctly prevented the forcefulness that his character required to hew an absolutely new idol for himself and his Italian contemporaries. If Leonardo's precepts helped him to clarify his aim in painting, his juxtaposition to Michelangelo hampered him. In relation to Michelangelo we see Pontormo as a tree with its roots planted at the foot of a giant mountain, desperately trying to put its branches beyond the mountain's shade. The tree is dwarfed by the mountain even while its roots receive nourishment from it.

Pontormo's portraits seem to prove that this tree, in spite of handicaps, did have its individual beauty, that it was indispensable to the landscape. For if his portraits have not the breath-taking brilliance of the "Mona Lisa," they do hold their own with such great work as Raphael's "Portrait of Baldassare Castiglione." In them there is a thoroughly sound basis of excellent Florentine craftsmanship, an essentially modern and tasteful portrayal of Florence's burghers and aristocrats. Bronzino at his best is closest to his master's work; but though he popularized his art, he could not improve upon it. But he did serve as a link between his master and the later Italian, Spanish, and Flemish portrait artists, who in turn passed on the tradition to modern times. Today Pontormo's art is preëminently understandable, sensitive, psychological, sometimes over-emphatic, but always individual; uneven perhaps, but nowhere of such sustained quality and charm as in the portraits.



PONTORMO: PORTRAIT OF ALESSANDRO DE MEDICI
PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART



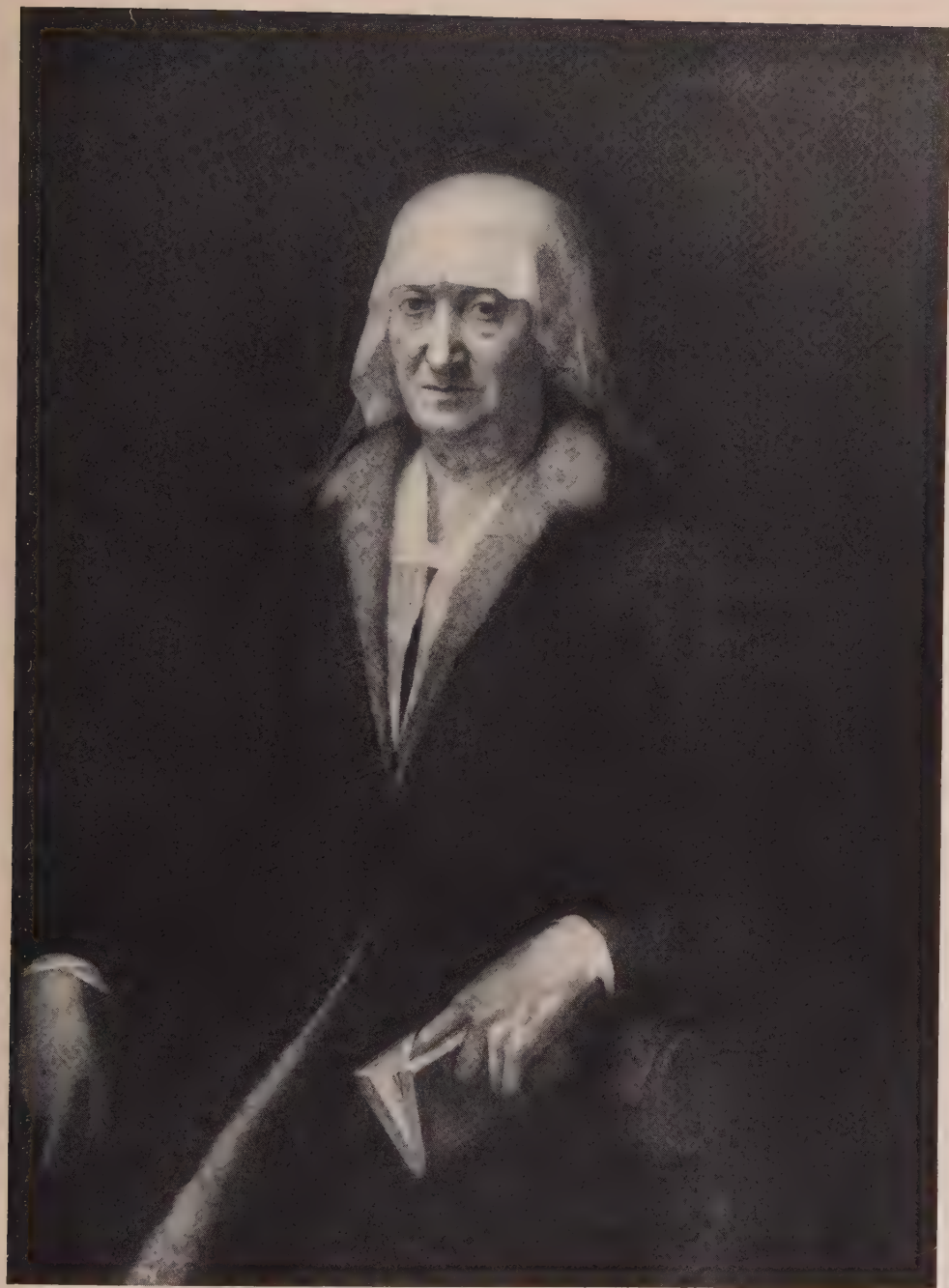
PONTORMO: PORTRAIT OF A LADY WITH A CARNATION HUNG OVER HER EAR
WIDENER COLLECTION



PONTORMO: PORTRAIT OF AN HALBERDIER
COLLECTION OF CHAUNCEY STILLMAN



PONTORMO: PORTRAIT OF CARDINAL SPANNOCCHI CERVINI
BORGHESE GALLERY, ROME



PONTORMO: PORTRAIT OF AN OLD LADY
IMPERIAL GALLERY, VIENNA

ON ABSTRACT PAINTING

By WILLIAM SCHACK

NEARLY two decades ago, in his *Modern Painting*, Willard Huntington Wright came to the conclusion that the future of the art lay in the development of pure color abstractions. Literal representation of objects had long been laid aside as a painter's plaything; the artists of the Renaissance had solved the problems of space; the impressionists had mastered the rendition of light (a mere effect, not a fundamental as it had once appeared to be, and hence only a digression from the main line of development); from Delacroix onward, color had been more and more freely handled, leading to Cézanne's ultimately successful use of color as a means of organizing the very space relations of a canvas. These successive stages won, nothing remained but to surpass Cézanne by a purely abstract color art, a synchromism in which colors, set free from the need of simulating even the suggestion of substance, should form a prismatic world all their own: anything else would be repetition or retrogression.

Logical though the historical development Wright traced and the thesis he evolved from it may seem, a great deal of painting, most of it essentially realistic, has been produced since his book was written, which, all theory aside, we recognize as fresh and distinctive, not retrogressive at all. And a persuasive synchromist has yet to make his appearance. While it is true that much more time must be allowed for an artist of sufficient stature to arise to take Wright's tremendous step, since it took centuries and the efforts of hundreds of painters to develop the earlier phases of the art, there are grounds nevertheless for setting limits to the possibilities of a wholly abstract art which shall be more than decoration. The very paintings of a high order of merit which have been achieved in a partially abstract vein indicate what these limits are.

What they demonstrate is that the abstract idiom differs in no essential from the many others that have been used; that, to be effective, abstract painting, like any other, must be a technically fine rendering of an artist's keen

response to something he has seen, whether directly in the external world or at an imaginative remove in the mind's eye—flowers, figures, a landscape, a room: always something he has *visually experienced*. Why is some degree of representation, using the term in its most elastic and not in any shallow photographic sense, indispensable? It is because there must be a medium of visual exchange between the artist and his audience, and the infinite number of objects which comprise the world constitute such a medium, and the only one we have. Generally we do not know the particular person, place, or thing that the artist uses for his subject. But we do know, with different degrees of sensitivity, a variety of human beings, natural scenes and objects, and are thereby enabled to create new varieties or, what is the same thing, to understand those which an artist creates. Once the prototype has been shown us in nature, we can follow him far into simplification or fanciful treatments, for the medium of visual exchange is still there.

An original artist may create a new, a foreign coinage which the public at first, being dubious of its "exchange value," may refuse to accept. Thus the public at first looked askance at the Van Gogh "Chair," which was not at all the familiar docile piece of furniture shown in the magazine advertisements, but a thing with a disturbingly dramatic quality. But if in the beginning it would not trust itself to "sit" in Van Gogh's chair, the public eventually realized there was none better made. The foreign coinage then had a value set on it and became part of the motley mediums of exchange circulating in the art world.

At what point any given art becomes acceptable on the exchange is of course purely a subjective matter, depending on one's previous training. Because it is still a comparatively new idiom, any abstraction has now, for a wide public, the dubious value of the coinage of a remote country. The painter who, becoming more and more sensitive to color relations, necessarily slights the close representation of objects seems to them to warp reality beyond all



CÉZANNE: LANDSCAPE: PINES AND ROCKS
BLISS COLLECTION, MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

recognition. It is my thesis that the synchromist, who avowedly dispenses with a medium of visual exchange, defeats himself; that an artist must reflect the external world in his work to attract any audience at all. He may be so subtle that he will at first find only a small audience to see eye to eye with him, but, in his own mind, his work must have an essentially realistic basis. And no man is so far superior to the rest of the race that he will not in time find his peers in sensibility, provided he has drawn on the same world they live in for the source of his inspiration. The abstract artist who has won an audience is the one who has given us a hint that his work, however remote from reality it may seem at first sight, was somewhere born of earth, that it is a transformation, however imaginative, of a genuine *vision*. This seems to be the outward limit of non-representational art, for beyond that (always excluding decoration, which may of course be exquisite, but which necessarily lacks the emotional quality of interpretive art) there is no medium of exchange between the painter and his public.

The peculiar properties of color, furthermore, make the need of such a medium all the more urgent. Detached from the objects in which it is embodied in the concrete world, color is a wild thing. By itself, as it glows in an expanse of sunset or in the vivid lines of the spectrum, there is something remote and eerie, something of the primal and unmanipulable quality of the emotions about it. To the eye of a child, color has this primitive blaze even in its ordinary incarnations. To this day I can recall the thrill of chalk colors in my first classroom nearly thirty years ago. Not only rich gala chalks: plushy red, green, and purple right through, but even the scant violet coating of the commonplace white variety was thus stimulating. Early in the 1920's the Secessionists in Germany were trying to capitalize such childhood reactions by setting down strips of color side by side, as in a printer's sample book, and calling the result creation. It was nothing of the sort; they were laying claim to a power not of their own making. The colors in themselves aroused our sensations, but there was nothing there to evoke the response of art. The abstractionist, less naïve than these Secessionists and striving honestly to create, is

nevertheless up against quite the same difficulty. Whereas other artists handle color for the most part as it is enchained in substance—in trees, earth, sea, clothes, flesh, and the multiplicity of man-made and natural objects, he is essaying to handle it as wild fire.

The synchromist, the pure abstractionist, therefore, faces this apparently insuperable hazard: that in foregoing the effort of seeking something fresh in the external world to arouse his sensibility, he must undergo the ordeal of creating entirely out of that sensibility. That would hold true even for an artist working in black and white. If he works in color, his difficulties are enormously enhanced. In creating out of color alone, out of color disembodied, some equivalent for the objects in which the representational artist fixes them, he must in effect evolve some "neo-substance," a god-like act presumptuous for a human being to dare.

One postulates the need for a medium of visual exchange, therefore, not merely because, to put it in the crudest terms, an artist must give the public what it wants. It is only one way of postulating what the artist himself needs by way of creative stuff, and indicating the difficulties which confront him if he dispenses with it.

Furthermore, an art born under this handicap, entirely out of the lashing of an artist's sensibility, is all the more in need of an audience to check its genuineness. For although ideally an artist is guided altogether by his own experience, insight, and technical resources rather than by what a hydra-headed public may like, he exercises, at least unconsciously, a degree of restraint when he works in a known medium of exchange, since he will be measured in its terms. But what is there to restrain him in the wilderness of abstract color where no man may surely follow him? Called on to judge of subtleties whose intention is turbid, one begins with the feeling that one may be witnessing only a parade of subtlety. If the artist gives us no suggestion of where he has been and what he has tried to observe, if he only sets us adrift on a sea of color, not only can we not be sure of his meaning, but we are inclined to doubt that he has a meaning at all. Knowing how great is the temptation to charlatanry he is exposed to; we suspect that he has succumbed to it when he does not provide us



Courtesy of An American Place

GEORGIA O'KEEFE: JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT, NUMBER 8

with that minimum glimpse of the world we know, as a clue to his creation.

Let us now test the thesis concretely. To my mind, no one has yet, in an abstract vein, surpassed the Cézanne studies of rocks and foliage in both water-color and oil. The "Pines and Rocks" reproduced here has, obviously, a realistic basis for its composition, but the actual painting, especially of the foliage, is largely abstract. If the forms of the trees were obliterated so that they would not be recognizable as such, the whole would therefore be an abstraction. It would then make a handsome pattern of color; but what makes this painting the magnificent thing it is, is precisely the fact that we see it as a subtle transcript of the play of light on foliage. Unrelated to its natural source, it would be handsome: it is magnificent only in view of its "meaning." The cubists, who carried Cézanne's abstraction to its "logical" conclusion and made painting entirely a thing of planes and patches, lost meaning and achieved, at best, a decorative value.

There are other studies in which Cézanne is more completely abstract, in which it is more difficult to follow him. As noted above, this is entirely a subjective matter. Those who cannot "see" these works as subtle readings of nature cannot accept them, but those who realize that they are not merely arbitrary abstractions but actual visions of nature simplified, find in them a superbly rewarding art. For there is then enough of nature in them to act as a medium of visual exchange.

The American water-colorist John Marin has also been a vigorous contributor to the abstract idiom. I cite his "Thunderstorm," illustrated here, as an interesting borderline case. If one looks at the picture without knowing the title assigned to it, one is attracted to a degree by its pattern of rich greys. Two planes in the center may suggest an open book as the focal point of the composition, around which the artist has let his fancy in color play. Still, the obscurity still holds us at a distance. The title brings us somewhat closer. The jagged line of lightning, for one detail, is now obvious, and one may imagine stormclouds in the upper portion of the painting. The page-like forms may be sheets of rain (no pun intended) or fields beneath the rain. Nevertheless, one still feels that fancy has been stretched too far, into

the realm of preciosity. But whether one follows Marin all the way in this work or not, there is no doubt that one can go further with him after one knows the alleged source of his inspiration.

On the other hand, another of his abstractions convinces one completely. A first glance notes a composition built up of variegated green masses at right and left, a streak of brown in the middle, and a greyish pyramidal form in the background. And at first glance the work impresses one as a felicitous if puzzling arrangement of color. But as soon as those green masses reveal themselves as bushes of exquisitely varied shades, as soon as the brown smear becomes a road and the pyramid a mountain, the whole comes to life as a tropical landscape which is no mere toying with colors, but a brilliant act of creation. What impresses one vaguely at first as sheer virtuosity gains enormously in value as one realizes that it is not merely a dexterous exercise in paint, but an unusually heightened response to the external world—as one finds the work "intelligible."

The art of Georgia O'Keeffe offers another touchstone for my thesis. At one extreme she is exactly representational, occasionally approaching the simple poster, but often attaining an indefinable poetic impress which takes the work out of the merely photographic class. In this category is a long series of canvases, the work of a zealous naturalist who, setting out with enthusiasm to record a leaf or a flower with complete accuracy, becomes more and more impressed by its fluent variations in color and contour and is no longer a naturalist but a mystic, no longer a painter of superb illustrations but of the spirit of natural forms. The leaf, the flower, looms so large that it cannot be a detail in an arrangement, as in a Redon piece; the single leaf, the single flower, is itself an elaborate arrangement, assuming the importance of the human figure: flowers are indeed O'Keeffe's portrait subjects.

Yet, even though we easily understand her so far and recognize a fine integrity in her, when she goes a step further, into the realm of abstraction, we can follow her only part way. We can follow her when she further stylizes her plant forms into abstractions, to some degree still recognizable, as in the "Jack-in-the-



Courtesy of An American Place

JOHN MARIN: NEW MEXICO—TAOS—STORM (WATER COLOR)

Pulpit” reproduced here. But she has also painted what amounts to the single “flash” of the color organ; and these paintings are as elusive as the motifs and compositions of that ambitious instrument. Honest as we know O’Keeffe to be, from her other work, we find in these paintings mystery, or hocus-pocus. Groping for a clue, we find only those vague physiological hollows that occur so often in the works of the color organ. The compositions as a whole are confined in their esoteric sensibility: they exclude our participation because we have never experienced anything like them on land or sea. Perhaps we have met their counterparts in the phantasmagorias of troubled sleep, but we do not retain our hold on them in the waking state, in which, also, art is created.

In the successful abstraction, one does not see, and after the first recognition does not necessarily look for, a point by point equivalence with the external world. After all, there is a good deal of what may be called random color in nature, as in a stretch of land, that is

in a sense abstract; and the convention of abstract backgrounds in portraits has long been taken for granted. All that one demands is the point of departure for the core of the composition—enough to show us that we are sharing an experience of the world we know. Undoubtedly there is room for a wide variety of semi-abstract expression to which Cézanne showed the way. Hundreds of artists may find release in it as their predecessors did in the art of Massaccio, Giotto, Leonardo, and the masters of other periods. But the complete abstraction of synchromism seems destined to be limited to the decorative arts which have always depended on pattern and color, such as the art of the potter and the weaver. Even the subtlest expression of pure intellect, mathematics, has its interrelations with the facts of the external world. Einstein still looks to the experimental physicists for corroboration of his theories. That part of the intellect which expresses itself visually, in art, can no more afford to dispense with a correlation with the world which is its frame of reference.

FLOWER ARRANGEMENT AS A FINE ART

By DOROTHY MEIGS EIDLITZ

WITH the growth of the garden club movement and the increasing number of community flower shows throughout the country, interest in the arrangement of cut flowers is assuming considerable proportions. American women are competing for blue ribbon awards and other prizes for the most artistic flower arrangements. Rivalry has not always been happy. There are complaints that honors are often determined by the beauty of the horticultural material used, or by the value of the accessories displayed in the setting, rather than by artistic merit in the arrangements themselves.

Even when the judges have focussed their attention upon the floral compositions, they have been guided necessarily by personal preference or taste. For until recently there were few definite and generally accepted standards for judging. Now that some consideration is being given to design in flower arrangements, Westerners, seeking rules for concrete application, are turning to the theories of arrangement long practiced by the Japanese.

In Japan, flower arrangement is not a pastime, but a dignified accomplishment practiced by men and women after many years of study. Only in that country are flowers and other plant material consciously used as recognized media for artistic expression. Japanese floral art has definite status as a fine art, with its own historical traditions, precepts of composition, and technical rules. It is taught by flower-masters representing hundreds of different schools which vary in degrees of formality in their design and in certain methods of assembling the composition. But all the classical schools practiced in Japan today exemplify the common traditions of the major schools which have flourished since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and have standardized Japanese floral art as a system of line design in triangular composition.

To transplant an art based on alien traditions, and designed for an environment so different from our own, would seem to be difficult and perhaps futile. If Japanese floral

art is worth transporting, it must be able to stand on its own intrinsic values and not derive its interest from the glamour and mystery of Oriental culture attached to it. The symbolic terms and those rules for arrangement which have their basis in aspects of religion, folklore, or customs that are purely Japanese, cannot be adopted in sincerity elsewhere.

Nor will Japanese floral art flourish abroad unless congenial soil is first prepared to receive it. It is perfectly adapted to its tranquil setting in a chaste Japanese room. Absence of furniture permits an unobstructed view of the alcove reserved for the few changeable decorative features—usually a hanging scroll, perhaps a treasured piece of porcelain, bronze, or lacquer, and generally an arrangement of flowers. All are placed in harmonious relationship, but each must have beauty when considered alone.

The beauty of Japanese flower arrangements can be appreciated only when their etched lines are seen in silhouette against neutral backgrounds. Their poise and restful dignity are lost amid the confused details of cluttered and over-decorated rooms. But some Western interiors are simple, inviting contemplation and repose. Their mood does not call for stimulating floral decorations. In such surroundings a lavish display of massed cut flowers of riotous coloring is obtrusive. A single Japanese arrangement is more effective in subtly creating a quiet impression of nature brought indoors.

And so, transferred to simple settings anywhere, and stripped of their Oriental garb, Japanese flower arrangements can be studied objectively as pure art motifs. It is interesting but not important to know that these floral compositions follow rules laid down in the fifteenth century by Soami, a Japanese painter, in collaboration with Yoshimasa, a wealthy shogun who abdicated his throne to devote his time to the practice of the tea ceremony, flower arrangement and other pursuits befitting a patron of the arts. The inherent structure of the compositions reveals the point of



prime importance—that they are based on universal laws of design and proportion. They can be judged by Western as well as Japanese standards. They illustrate, for instance, the pictorial qualities set forth as essential by Sir Charles Holmes in his *Notes on the Science of Picture-making* and conform to the requirements of Allen Tucker in his *Design and the Idea*.

II

The practice of flower arrangement as an art requires more time and study than we of the West are accustomed to lavish on anything as impermanent as flowers. We are generally satisfied if flowers are merely placed in water, claiming to prefer natural disarray to deliberately planned arrangements. Only on occasion are we seized with an inspiration to express ourselves in flowers. The results may give self-satisfaction as do many other forms of personal soliloquy. But if our flower arrangements are to be recognized by others as dramatic decorations, communicating emotions or ideas to be shared, they must utilize known symbols or standard conventions of expression.

Japanese arrangements are notably eloquent in language which is readily interpreted. Expressive conventions have been evolving since the sixth century, when Buddhist priests gave thought to the preservation and care of floral offerings at the temples. As definite systems of arrangement developed, the traditions were handed down verbally from master to trusted disciple. With the growth of democracy, the rules of floral art were guarded with less secrecy, and of late popular text-books and treatises on the subject have been offered to the world's most literate nation.

Not all artists admit that study or practice of underlying principles play a part in their works of genius. But Japanese flower-masters agree with Leonardo da Vinci who, in one of his manuscripts, says, "Those who are enamoured of practice without science are like a pilot who goes into a ship without rudder or compass and never has any certainty where he is going." To their pupils they say what Sir Joshua Reynolds said in his seventh Discourse, "As our art is not a divine gift so neither is it a mechanical trade. Its foundations are laid in solid science; and practice, though essential

to perfection, can never attain that to which it aims unless it works under the direction of principle."

Even among those who ordinarily accept rules as aids rather than fetters in the practice of the arts, there is a tendency to resist the imposition of law on nature. Allen Tucker says, "The vision we derive from nature must be in terms of design." But many contend that nature cannot be improved upon and are shocked at seeing a flower-artist impressing his will upon natural material, which he especially selects, ruthlessly prunes, and gradually transforms by skilful bending and manipulation to assume new outlines which are finally united into an organic whole.

We grant liberties with nature to artists working with brushes more readily than to artists working with scissors. Yet portrayal of nature by the Japanese methods of flower arrangement proceeds on the assumption of da Vinci that "The painter contends with and rivals nature." The late Timothy Cole expressed this struggle when he said, "Art is recreation. The spirit of the artist must dominate nature, using her but as raw material." But Cole also felt a sense of coöperation in saying, "Nature is inarticulate if man does not make her vocal."

Unaided, nature may reveal her wasteful abundance. Artists must help to bring out her hidden beauty, by knowing what to select and emphasize. As Whistler says, the artist is bound to choose and group "as the musician gathers his notes and forms chords until he bring forth from chaos glorious harmony."

The artist is not untrue to nature when he ceases to imitate nature. The Japanese flower-artist reproduces the natural details which enhance the charm or decorative quality of the picture. He employs flexible principles of design only for the purpose of giving proper emphasis to the subject.

Japanese flower arrangements are true portraits in which art and nature are reconciled and blended. They are dynamic portraits of living natural plant material, not studies in still life. The arrangements represent growing plants vigorously springing from the earth's surface indicated by the water-line in the container. By using buds, foliage, and stems, not merely fully developed blossoms,



the plant's habits of growth are shown. Only flowers which would grow together naturally, in the same environment and at the same season, are permitted to be combined in these pictures. Natural characteristics are preserved in the arrangement; vines droop from hanging receptacles, water-loving plants are arranged in low open basins. Flowers are never crowded and choked in narrow-necked vases, but supported by special means in containers designed to prolong the life of the flowers. The growth of the plant is never sacrificed for the pictorial effect of the composition.

III

The artistic devices employed by the Japanese to achieve their effects in floral designs are not unique. They elect the triangle as their working unit in two-dimensional space. This form, which is particularly appropriate in a country whose landscape is dominated by the beloved outlines of Fuji-yama, finds favor also in the Western world. Sir Charles Holmes describes "the principle of triangular or pyramidal composition" as "the secret of almost all stable and compact pictorial designs." He suggests, however, that if a picture adhere too literally to the principle it becomes very stiff and formal. "To endow it with life it must be varied by serpentine or undulating lines."

These principles are illustrated in the accompanying prints from a text-book of the Ko-ryu school of flower arrangement. Figure I shows how a square drawn within a perfect circle is bisected into two triangles in either of which the lines may be arranged. Figures II *a* and *b* show this orthodox line design transferred to a vase and worked in seven separate units of flower material, with the main line, or *Heaven* principle, bent bow-shaped with tip directly over the base; the second principle, *Man*, united at the base with the central dominant line, but extending to one side; the third and shortest principle, *Earth*, springing from the common source but pointing in the alternate direction. The supplementary lines in the diagrams are simply modifying attributes of the three main lines.

In the fundamental style of this school, *Heaven* is twice the length of *Man*, and *Man* is twice as long as *Earth*. But variations from the strict rule are permissible as in the ex-

amples III *a* and *b*. Other deviations tend to enrich and conceal the general plan, although all schools base their designs on similar orthodox schemes.

The ratio of proportions used in Japanese flower arrangements are the same as set forth by Coan and Coleman in their two books, *Nature's Harmonic Unity and Proportional Form*, as the principle of "extreme and mean proportion." From this theory they evolve a "law of golden series" based on rhythms of "proportional spaces in flowers, plants, shells and other natural objects." A similar ratio is set down in the rules of linear perspective by Leonardo concluding "and thus by successive degrees at equal distances the objects will be continually lessened by half."

But as Holmes suggests, the proportions in a picture should be subtle. He decries the common text-book recommendation for placing the horizon at a readily measured level of division. Plato, in *Philebus*, has Socrates say "If arithmetic, mensuration and weighing be taken out of any art, that which remains will not be much." And Professor Denman W. Ross claims "The only thing which remains in art beyond measurable quantities and qualities is the personality, the peculiar ability or genius of the artist himself."

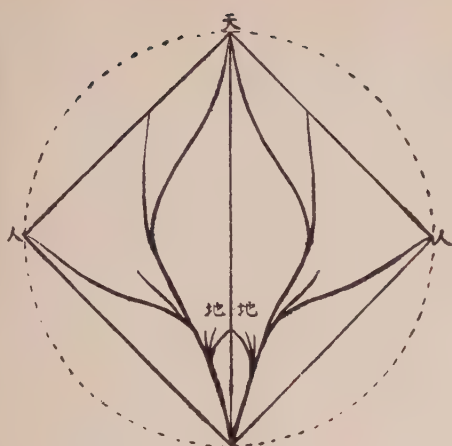
But the flower artist does not rely on instruments of precision. His eye is trained to measure spaces and recognize the harmonies of rhythm which make design decorative. He accepts the technical traditions, however, as a starting-point, a base for his genius.

IV

Since Japanese flower designs are based on rules of composition commonly known in the Western world, they should qualify as pictorial works of art according to Occidental criteria. Holmes lists, as four such essential qualities, unity, vitality, infinity, and repose. Professor Ross's *Theory of Pure Design* stresses "order, consisting of three things—harmony, balance and rhythm." The flower pictures presented by members of the Japanese Women's Club of New York at the International Flower Show last March and at the Nippon Club in May* comply with these standards which are combined in one statement by Allen Tucker, "De-

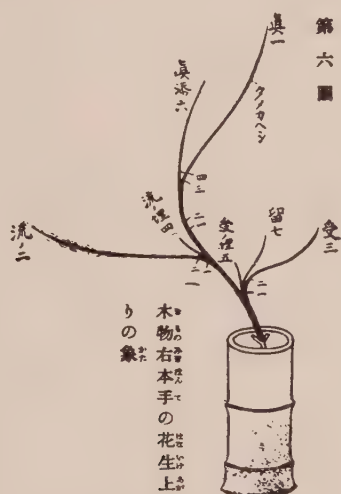
* See halftone illustrations accompanying this article.

藏三



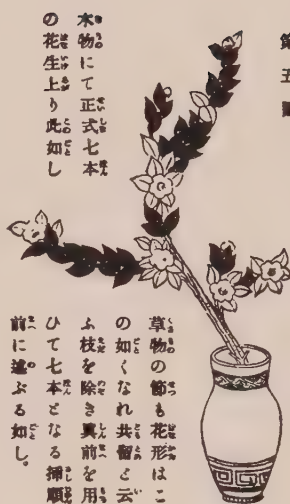
本手花象の根元此如し

第六圖



木物きもの右本手みぎほんての花生上はなせいじやう
りの象かた

第五



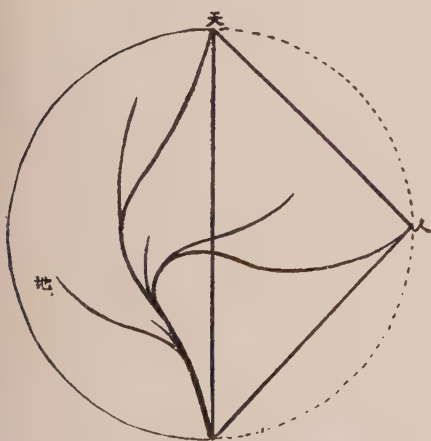
木物にて正式七本
の花生上り此如し



ふ枝を除き眞前を用
ひて七本なる挿順
前に違ふ如し。

今更に國情を論ずるに非ず

第 八 圖



◎ 片落おたきの生法いけほう及矯方をよびためかた

し 知_レ此_レ元_ノ根_ノの 象_ニ花_ニし 落_キ片_キ



sign consists of unity, balance, rhythm, harmony and contrast."

Unity in these compositions is sensed immediately. Each is complete in itself, even when forming part of a decorative scheme. Each has a dominant theme in the *Heaven* principle which is strategically placed nearest the center and marks the highest point in the design. The other lines, in a regular sequence of diminishing importance, do not compete, but only serve to strengthen and enhance the chief motif. All the parts are properly related, expanding from a single united base into a coherent whole.

The flower artist brings out a single thought or feeling about his subject by a deliberate economy of means. He selects the right material and rejects everything superfluous, cutting out growth which obscures the strong curved lines—small twigs that cross or add confusion, duplicate blossoms, drooping leaves, retaining only whatever proves essential to complete the original conception.

Balance without symmetry is a difficult achievement successfully demonstrated by all Japanese flower arrangements. While there is an imaginary median line in the chord of *Heaven's* bow, the two sides are not alike. But there is "equal opposition and consequent equilibrium" in what Ross describes as "a form of balance in which directions or inclinations to the right are counteracted by corresponding or equivalent directions or inclinations to the left."

Objects in nature are never entirely symmetrical. The Japanese indicate this asymmetry by always using an uneven number of branches or blossoms in the floral compositions. Balance, as Tucker explains, "does not mean repose in the sense of sleep; it means that active force holds other active force in place, that the forces which make the world go round are alive in the picture."

The world is always moving. Nothing is static. So Japanese art is always dynamic. The subject may be a whirling wave, a swimming carp, or a growing flower, but it will always have rhythmic vitality. The sense of life is derived from a sense of movement. In these floral compositions, undulating lines, vital in themselves, are emphasized by the rhythmic

recurrence of similar modifying lines. The diagonal lines of the triangle in which the lines are grouped accentuate the swing and movement. Yet there is no impression of instability.

There is a calm restfulness of spirit in the mere restraint of Japanese floral compositions. All the space is not filled in. No mass of flowers, however gently rounded and subdued, has the repose of a few simple clear-cut lines contrasted with a large surrounding area of blank space.

Composition, according to Tucker, is "contrasted harmonies or harmonized contrast." Japanese flower arrangements illustrate this theory in other ways through their harmonizing lines in contrasting positions. Their harmonic rhythm of proportions is carried out in the relationship of the flower arrangement to the measurements of the vase. But there is contrast in character between the flowers and the vase. A rigid container enhances the grace of the flowers it displays. Their delicacy of color and line is brought out best when contrasted with the sturdiness of containers of dark earth-colored bronze, undecorated porcelain, or natural woods in neutral tones.

V

There is danger in studying rules and analyzing causes. The end is sometimes lost through preoccupation with the means. Familiarity with the principles of design and access to the most beautiful plant material will not produce distinguished artistic results in flower arrangement, unless used to communicate some emotion or idea worthy of expression. The flower artist must be on intimate terms with nature, and have the instinct to recognize and the taste to group the essential aspects, so as to re-create his image or experience for the enjoyment of others. The subtle distinction, the evanescent charm, the infinite spirit with which the individual genius endows his work cannot be copied or taught. Such characteristics must be felt, just as beauty must be experienced.

The Japanese way is not the only route to beauty in flowers, but it is a road clearly marked with sign-posts for all who pursue the course of flower arrangement as a fine art.









FIELD NOTES

EARLY AMERICAN PAINTING, WORCESTER

JOINTLY sponsored by the American Antiquarian Society and the Worcester Art Museum was the important exhibition of seventeenth-century American paintings held at the Museum through July. Several features of the exhibition, aside from its artistic importance, brought it prominently into public notice. First of all, the Massachusetts Legislature voted to lend the portraits of Governor Simon Bradstreet and of Reverend John Wheelwright to the exhibition, a most unusual procedure; second, the Boston Atheneum is lending (for one of the few times since 1861 that they have left its building) two of its precious portraits. Also many another institution, educational or historical or both, known for its New England austerity in matters of lending, has helped to make the exhibition unusually significant.

The authorship of all but one of the pictures is unknown. The initials "T. S." (possibly Thomas Smith) signed on one picture may prove the key which will solve the problem of attribution, if paintings can be "attributed" to an artist of whom so little is known.

The fact that these thirty-odd pictures are hanging together presents an opportunity for critical and technical comparison which will form the basis of a handsome, fully-illustrated catalogue to be published at the close of the exhibit. Thus is presented an opportunity for some invaluable critical spade-work, which, despite a considerable body of valuable scholarship in the field of Colonial American painting, is still sorely needed. It is hoped that X-ray photographs of the pictures will bring to light much that has formerly necessarily remained unknown. Whatever discoveries are made will be made permanently available in the forthcoming catalogue.

This brief comment on an unusual exhibition should not end without mention of one picture in particular, "Madam Freake and Baby Mary," which may prove to have been painted by Thomas Smith. A statement from the Museum says that "the portrait . . . is considered by all authorities one of the outstanding paintings from an aesthetic point of view produced by an American painter before the year 1700."

In the October issue of the magazine, there will be an article on this exhibition and on seventeenth-century painting, by Virgil Barker.

1934 CARNEGIE JURY ANNOUNCED

AN artist, an art critic, and an art museum director will serve with Homer Saint-Gaudens as the Jury of Award for the 1934 Carnegie International to run from October eighteenth to December ninth at Pittsburgh. Mr. Saint-Gaudens, as Director of Fine Arts of Carnegie Institute, is to be Chairman of the jury.

The artist is Gifford Beal, N.A., noted American painter and etcher. The critic is Miss Elisabeth Luther Cary of the *New York Times*. The museum director is Alfred H. Barr, Jr., of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Homer Saint-Gaudens has recently returned from Europe where he selected about two hundred and fifty paintings for the foreign section of the International. The art public is always interested to hear what Mr. Saint-Gaudens has to say about the art situation in Europe. This year it is about situations. Said he: "I rejoice at the decentralization of art which I found in Europe. Europe is returning to a régime of a more fortunate era in which Mozart could uphold the genius of one town and Goethe of another. It was a time in which each community, large and small, very properly had its own breed of culture. Just such artistic self-consciousness as this promotes the competition which we prize in all other fields of human endeavor. As long as only one artistic school exists to the exclusion of all others, as for instance the School of Paris, art is bound to slip into a rut, perhaps a good rut, but always a rut. . . ."

"As a result of my visit this year, I arrived at the conclusion that there is nothing very outstanding in art these days, that is there are very few idols as Whistler or Sargent or Mancini were in the nineties. Nevertheless, there are a number of really strong men scattered all over Europe, and what is better than that, I think the whole art situation is coming up for air and a little horse sense. . . ."

WALTER DORWIN TEAGUE ON MACHINE ART

BOSTON'S Art Week is neither a publicity stunt in the booster spirit, nor a tepid affair of interest only to those few to whom art is already home ground. It is a vital expression of a wise old city's attitude toward her artists.



Photograph by Albert Duval

H. EDWARD WINTER: TROPICAL FISH

Vitreous Enamel Panel for the Ferro Enamel Corporation, Cleveland

Consequently one of the country's foremost designers was glad to speak on Machine Art at the Art Week Luncheon last spring.

A few excerpts—and all too brief ones—will doubtless prompt readers to send for copies of his address which was issued in the *Design News Letter* for May twenty-fourth. (For copies of the complete speech address John E. Alcott, Supervisor of Vocational Art Education in Industry and Business, 364 Brookline Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts.)

"Seeking patiently, generation after generation, to evoke this perfect harmony of form and function, the world's craftsmen have arrived at the incredible beauty of certain scythes and swords and axes and pots. The beauty of these things, like the beauty of an oak tree or a panther, is our eyes' recognition of the fact that within their own class and metier, they are just about the best that can be made. Because of beauty's importance as an index of fine workmanship and high quality, it quickly became a preoccupation in itself. . . ."

And further on: "There is only one standard of beauty. Whatever we do must stand comparison with anything out of the past—Greek, Gothic or Congo—and prove itself against the best. But it must also be definitely ours, expressive of our lives and spirits; and it must be honestly determined by the use

for which it is intended and the materials and processes by which it is made. Design is not so much invented as evoked: the designer asks himself, What is this thing for? What is it made of? How is it made? And if he is a good designer, a composite answer to these questions gradually reveals itself as the ultimate form which that thing ought to assume. This ultimate form is latent in the thing itself, as the color of our eyes and the shape of our fingers are latent in the uniting cells with which our lives begin. It may take long effort and much patient striving to discover it, and in the process the thing itself may change and develop, pushing always the perfect form just beyond our grasp. But the solution of the problem depends in no way on caprice or arbitrary decisions: it will be arrived at with the inevitability of a mathematical formula. . . ."

VITREOUS ENAMEL DECORATIONS

ONE imagines that important industrial executives decorate their private offices with the products of their factories: velvet-lined wall cases of up-to-the-minute lasts in the sanctum of the shoe executive; libraries for the master printer; designs of the latest streamlined motor cars in Detroit. In the office of Robert A. Weaver, President of the Ferro Enamel Corporation of Cleveland, is a decora-

tive panel for the wall made with Ferro Porcelain Enamel on eighteen-gauge Armco Iron. It is unusual on three counts: (1) the quality of the design by H. Edward Winter (whose smaller products, or creations, have recently been among the high spots in the craft sections of the Cleveland Museum's annual May Shows) which is revealed, as the color cannot be, in the accompanying reproduction; (2) its unusually large size, three and a half by five and a half feet; and (3) the fact that it was executed by the artist himself with a high degree of technical excellence.

Mr. Weaver is more fortunate than many another executive, in having something as fine to look at. With wise generosity he has shared the pleasure with others. A series of eight panels of like size, though somewhat less complex in design and color, adorns Ferro's reception corridor. These represent steps in the manufacture of enamels in a purely decorative and semi-abstract manner. Mr. Weaver's panel has as subject-matter large tropical rainbow fish against a background of marine plant life. Its colors, predominantly blue, with subordinate black, pink, white, tan, and pale yellow, are in perfect harmony with the other decorations of the room.

AMERICAN ART AT VENICE, ADRIATIC TROUBLED

BRANDED as peculiar was the attitude of the Italian management of the Venice Biennial concerning the appearance of a picture by a Polish painter, Tade Stryka, in the American pavilion at the exhibition. This year, as we have already announced, the American section was selected from the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art at the request of the Grand Central Art Galleries, owners of the pavilion. Consequently the American section was in charge of Mrs. Juliana Force, Director of the Whitney Museum.

The American pavilion had been opened and Mrs. Force had gone on a business trip to England. When word came that a foreign picture had been hung she immediately requested Count Volpi, President of the Biennial, to remove the picture. The request was flatly refused. Mrs. Force responded by sending an agent to remove the American exhibit. But the Italian authorities would not allow that and it was learned that if the case was brought into an Italian court no decision could be reached until after the show had been disbanded anyway.

The American exhibit remains and so does

the Polish portrait of Marion Davies hanging in the vestibule. There was nothing more that Mrs. Force could do; she and all those (they are very many) who know that she is absolutely right will have to be content for a while, at least, with their conviction of righteousness.

Obscured by the brilliant names involved (Count Volpi, William Randolph Hearst, and Marion Davies on one side; Mrs. Whitney, Mrs. Force and most independent American artists on the other) are two questions of far-reaching importance to the American art world: the foreign "society" portraitist of dubious merit, an old problem, and the strident nationalism of present-day American expression. Mrs. Force was emphatically right in regard to the first one and perfectly clearheaded as regards the second.

Our hats are off to Mrs. Force.

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL AT LOS ANGELES

THE jury of selection and awards for the Fifteenth Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture at the Los Angeles Museum was this year composed as follows: Leo Katz, Louis Danz, Preston Harrison, Mrs. L. M. Maitland, Hanson Puthuff, Roscoe Shrader, and Merrell Gage.

In painting the Museum Awards went to:



MINO DA FIESOLE: SCIPIO AFRICANUS
Recently Acquired by the Pennsylvania Museum
of Art. See page 491.



SAKYA-MUNI WITH TWO BODHISATTVAS

Chinese Buddhist Stele, Northern Wei Period (386-534 A. D.),
Recently Acquired by the Worcester Art Museum. See page 499.

Alexander Brook for his "Walking Figure," to Yasuo Kuniyoshi for his "Fruit on Table," to Everett Gee Jackson for his "Sailor Beware," and to Phil Dike for his "Echo Park"; honorable mentions were given to Jack Fry for his "Still Life," and to Claude Coats for his "Sell It and Buy a Horse." In sculpture awards were given to Archibald Garner for his "Young Philosopher," to Jacques Schnier for his "Two Figures," and to George Stanley for his "Women."

Of the one hundred and fifteen paintings hung thirty-one were invited; of the nineteen pieces of sculpture two were invited. Awards went to only two of the invited canvases and to neither of the invited sculptures.

The exhibition ran through June seventeenth.

LITTLE CIVIC ART GALLERY OPENS AT CANTON, OHIO

LATE in May there opened in a room in the Canton Public Library the Little Civic Art Gallery, with its initial undertaking a show of work by local artists. It was a thoroughly co-operative enterprise, various groups and firms giving goods and services as the case might be.

The gallery has as its aims and purposes

"To stimulate Art Appreciation by means of exhibitions, graphic, plastic, and craft. Also by illustrated lectures on 'Art Fundamentals' and the 'History of Art'; to stimulate art in public schools by means of special children's exhibitions and competitions . . . to stimulate public appreciation for manufactured products of local, state, and national firms having worthy artistic value; to stimulate public interest and appreciation in all locally executed art work. . . ."

The director of the Little Civic Art Gallery is Gordon Pryce.

FLEXIBLE BUYING POLICY AT ANDOVER'S MUSEUM

IN accordance with a growing tendency among American museums to give a more complete representation to contemporary art, the Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, has recently acquired several paintings by living Americans, according to a statement recently received. At the time of its opening about three years ago it had an outstanding collection of paintings of the nineteenth century; its scope is now broadened to include the young and experimental as well as the old and tested. The Art

Committee seeks to preserve a balance between various groups, eliminating from consideration only those whose work is a repetition of the past. The older academicians such as Frank Benson and Childe Hassam have been joined by their younger associates, Speicher, Aldro Hibbard, and Jonas Lie (who is also their president). The independent American school is represented by artists of such varying tendencies as Hopper, Burchfield, Benton, Curry, Canade, Kuhn, Meyer, Sterne, Dickinson, Demuth, Poor, and Soyer. Thus are suggested, if not quite completely, some of the many currents of modern painting.

The Gallery's Art Committee is apparently not blind to the folly of trying to judge and acquire for all time the work of contemporary painters. They have adopted a purchasing policy that provides for continual revision and turnover, when time fails to support the Committee's judgment. In selling a picture to the Gallery, the artist agrees to exchange the picture, at the option of the Committee, for another one, the difference in price being paid by the Gallery. The Committee furthermore reserves the right to sell or exchange it for the work of another artist if this should become desirable. The advantage to the Gallery is obvious; the artist also benefits by having his work included during his lifetime. If he progresses (in the opinion of the Committee) he has opportunity to sell more pictures at better prices.

This obviously marks a step in the right direction, reveals a way to keep store rooms clear of unsuccessful buys of the past, gives the artist a deserved and more than ephemeral showing.

SOCIETY OF MEDALISTS, NINTH MEDAL

THE ninth medal to be issued by The Society of Medalists, New York, appeared in May. Its sculptor was Herbert Adams, N.A., one of the advisory board of the Society. Writing of the medal in the leaflet that accompanies each one issued he said: "This medal is dedicated to all true fishermen. Generally speaking, our previous medals have been circular in outline. For the sake of variety, I have used a modified octagonal form. The theme of my 'piece of eight' is told in its inscription, quoted from a poem written by Oliver Wendell Holmes for the Berkshire Jubilee, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, 1844:

Oh, what are the prizes we perish to win
To the first little 'shiner' we caught with a pin?

Beneath these whimsical words of the poet runs a vein of seriousness. I have not been unmindful of that undercurrent. A boy fishing is a common sight. But a boy's hopes, aspirations, struggles—these are things that build the world's epics."

The medal, reproduced here, has under its whimsical first appearance an undercurrent of ability and insight.

SOME RECENT ACCESSIONS

MINO DA FIESOLE'S famous "Scipio," a bas-relief in the antique manner, is among several objects recently purchased by the Pennsylvania Museum of Art, Philadelphia. It now joins the ranks of the already numerous pieces of the Foulc Collection of Renaissance Art, in the permanent collections of the Museum.

This white marble, rectangular plaque rep-



HERBERT ADAMS: MEDAL

The Ninth Medal to Be Issued by The Society of Medalists.

CHARLES
BURCHFIELD:

WINTER
BOUQUET

Recently acquired
by the Museum of
Fine Arts, Boston.



resents the profile bust of a bearded, heavy-faced Roman, his tousled hair bound with a fillet. The inscription reads I SCIPIONE but the deduction to be drawn from this is that Mino was more able as a sculptor than as an archaeologist. The bearded face he carved has little resemblance to the thin, clean-shaven, and bald Scipio of the Roman busts, but is quite like the conventionalized Hadrian which, stamped on coins, was familiar throughout the Roman world.

* * *

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, has recently augmented its collection of work by living Americans through the purchase of a water color by Charles Burchfield entitled "Winter Bouquet." An appreciation of the pic-

ture is enhanced by reading the artist's own description, and his explanation of the idea he wished to express in it: "The 'Winter Bouquet' was painted in my studio at Gardenville in November, 1933. The impulse to paint such a subject came about gradually. I had amused myself all fall in gathering various dead flowers and seed-pods, in order to have a bouquet for my studio through the winter; in fact I have always thought that many of our flowers and weeds are just as beautiful dead as when growing. I decided to express this idea in painting. The bouquet, while beautiful in itself, did not seem sufficient to express the whole idea, and I conceived the idea of putting in a background suggestive of November and the impending

(Continued on page 498)

NEW BOOKS ON ART

Art Young's Inferno

Drawings and Text by Henry Arthur Young. New York, Delphic Studios, Publishers. Price, \$5.00.

THE Inferno of Art Young is planned after the traditional literary and pictorial models, but adjusted to our times. It is the fire and brimstone of our forefathers, grown (under the influence of progressive methods) into a modern commercial metropolis, with all its filth and greed and uproar. The reporter has observed minutely and has set forth in pictures and print his impressions of the tortures imposed upon the inhabitants in the subways, the reeking streets, the business places, the beauty parlors.

Art Young, as he appears in the frontispiece plate, a drawing by Clemente Orozco, is no longer a young man. His earnest, deeply lined face shows that he has known in no superficial manner the sights and occurrences of his Inferno. In a foreword his friend and attorney, Mr. Charles Recht, gives a brief review of his character and career, telling of his dogged abhorrence of all injustice, tempered by a tender sentiment; of his early training in Paris and admiration for Daumier; and of the famous trial, when he and other contributors to *The Masses* were indicted for the publication of what was considered seditious matter. Young himself, in his Preface, tells of his youthful interest in Hell, and of his familiarity with it gained through the study of famous writers on the subject, and the picturings of such artists as Botticelli, Dürer, Breughel, Callot, Flaxman, Blake, and Doré.

Apparently he is the first to have treated the subject simultaneously in drawing and written word. The method gives him an advantage over his predecessors: but at the same time it creates the problem of uniting two arts to produce a single effect, and gives rise to the often repeated question as to the propriety of such a device. Art Young has used it here with much success, because he has pushed through with a single purpose, solving the problem by ignoring it. One feels (if one pauses at all to consider the matter) that these terse, fearful chapters of description and criticism, and these devastating pictures of an agonizing underworld, do belong together, and support each other in carrying the burden of the theme. In some cases pictures and text combine effectively as page lay-out. Notice, for example, the two adjacent pages dealing with The Depression.

But very likely most of the drawings were not made to fill certain spaces, but to convey more circumstantially the ideas involved. One guesses that the illustrator has thought very little of artistic means, being thoroughly intent upon an ulterior motive—that of propaganda. This lack of deliberation in presenting his subject is at once his strength and his failing. As a failing it is not to be passed over with excuses or rationalizing. It must rather be accepted as a necessary personal quality, for if the writing had been more thoughtful, or the illustrations more cleverly devised, the book would not have such a powerful directness, and above all, it would not have been Art Young's Inferno.

The drawings (with which we are here particularly concerned), when considered as specimens of draughtsmanship, are found to be of unequal merit, as they differ a great deal in manner. Those that are of first rank in design and technique are some done in washed tones of ink: "Charon," "Junk," "Satan's Summer Palace," "Trying to End It All," "Ruins of Ancient Hell," and (the mightiest of the lot) "The Idiot Giant War." On the whole the artist works best when using a great quantity of black, thus simplifying his design. Too frequently the individual line is scratchy, or has the uninspired listlessness of the daily newspaper cartoonist who works by rote; while a desire to render completely scenes of infernal chaos results in a crowded and spotty page. However, in some examples the artist shows his mastery in handling a pen-stroke full of character and telling force. Among the best of these are: "The Goat," "Graft," "Monsters," "Super-Helion," the "Ugolino" tailpiece, and two extraordinary drawings showing the naked people of Hell battling, squirming, and sweltering in a crowded subway. Many of the decorative fillers also, figures or silhouettes of bats, demons, monkeys, devils, or tortured souls, deserve favorable comment.

Surely no one can turn through these solemn, caustic pages and remain unmoved. It would be unfair to overlook their value because they come to us from the pen of a cartoonist impelled by reforming zeal. Other artists greatly admired today (such as Rouault) have sacrificed excellence in drawing to the rage of their feeling. It is reassuring to find that there are still artists who are less concerned with abstruse theory than with meaningful con-

(Continued on page 496)

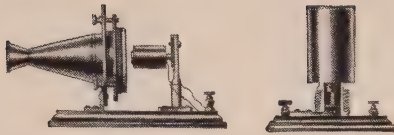
A MESSAGE TO ADVERTISERS

ANNOUNCING

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New Books on Art

(Continued from page 493)

tent. If skill were to be raised above character as a criterion, many virtuosi would take precedence over some of the greatest names of art history. Art Young has not the pervasive understanding of Rembrandt or Goya or Daumier. But he has a mind that lays hold and drives, and a robust though mellowed nature about whose earnest concern for humanity there can be no question. Such a severe critic must be capable of great sympathy.

BERNARD LEMANN

Art, Life and Nature in Japan

By Masaharu Anesaki. Boston, Marshall Jones Company, Publishers. Price, \$3.50.

THIS volume is enlarged from a series of lectures delivered at Harvard by Professor Anesaki, and in places seems insufficiently altered from the technique of spoken to that of written language. The introduction to the subject and the general sketching of the scene in contemporary Japan read too much like a primer or a guide book, and many of the illustrations seem chosen in this spirit. But once arrived at the specific and historical the style is scholarly and interest in the book accelerates.

Working on difficult ground where changes take place by almost imperceptible shades Anesaki writes of Japanese art and social life in a very coherent and informative way. Much of the historical consideration is, of course, factual, but it is interpreted and filled out in an attempt to give a well-rounded picture of the whole subject of the book. Frequent references are made to the paternity of styles and ideas as they are taken over from China into Japanese art, but for the most part the book is concerned with the actual ways in which Japan assimilated the older culture without reference to the original stimulus of the ideas. The emphasis on books on Oriental art is too often in the other direction, and as a result this volume succeeds in giving a clearer impression than most of the individual character of the art of Japan.

Through literature, history, and a detailed account of the social traditions of the country a broad background for the understanding of the art is given. Though the book is in number of pages very brief when one remembers the scope of its subject, clear pictures of considerable breadth emerge from the writing. The chapters devoted to the Fujiwara period are particularly well written and the most intrinsically interesting, for the polish and subtlety of the art of this time and its application to

all pursuits of life make interesting reading. But Anesaki carries the exposition further into the Beauty of Decadent Sentimentalism in which cleverness reached even greater extremes.

Anesaki has the faculty of differentiating clearly between the character of the subsequent periods, however similar they may be in superficial detail. He traces the final stagnation of the old academic tradition and the growth of the popular bourgeois one; but he stops short of showing how even this latest growth is to continue to be a vital product of contemporary Japan rather than a hangover of tradition that has not fundamentally dealt with the new demands of Japanese life.

INSLEE A. HOPPER

The Merrymount Press

Notes on the Press and Its Work by Daniel Berkeley Updike. With Bibliographical List of Books Printed 1893-1933, by Julian Pearce Smith. Harvard University Press, Publishers. Price, \$7.50.

IN the preface to this delightful volume Mr. Updike gives an account of how it came into being, and furnishes a recipe which might well be used by others if they would get as interesting results by the method practiced in this case.

To those interested in the recent history of printing Mr. Smith's amazing list of seven hundred and sixty-two books produced at the Merrymount Press, with notations of important minor printing at the end of each year's record, will be of primary concern. To those others, also, who are interested in learning how careers are made, Mr. Updike's notes present fifty-seven pages of as persuasive and charming writing as one could find. He gives a delightful account of the Boston of that period. Against this background, even as part of it, the development of the Merrymount Press from its small beginnings at the State House end of Beacon Street, the migration to an office in Tremont Place, the moving to 104 Chestnut Street (with subsequent addition of the next building) makes absorbing reading.

Mr. Updike's description of how the momentous decision to move into a manufacturing building at 232 Summer Street, and how this great loft space gained character and interest, is full of a pervading humanity. There are enough illustrations to show the plant in most of its quarters, including the present ones in Beacon Street toward Brookline from Governor Square.

These notes are well worth reading for the pleasure they give, despite the fact that they are made up, for the most part, of brief accounts of books produced. Scattered through

(Continued on page 498)

THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE OF ART

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New Books on Art

(Continued from page 496)

out are paragraphs which make clear the philoso-
phy underlying Mr. Updike's striking suc-
cess as a printer. One of the most significant
is the following, which seems worth quoting
to indicate the character of this publication:

"I am often asked if it is not uninteresting
to undertake the printing of catalogues and
similar material. As a matter of fact, such
work is often both interesting and difficult, for
in no class of printing is it so necessary to
preserve clearness and simplicity. Refractory
tabulation has to be so managed as to conceal
its refractoriness; type arrangements that will
be suitable to all the varying classes of in-
struction have to be schemed; and that a col-
lege catalogue is a book of reference has to be
kept clearly in view. To the printer such work
appears interesting, to the layman dull. For
at the risk of digression I may add that the
attitudes of mind of a professional and of an
amateur about printing—as in most forms of
creative endeavor—are quite different. The on-
looker supposes the printer to enjoy doing
what he enjoys seeing and to be bored by what
bores him; and he also believes that the feel-
ing of a man who does a piece of work suc-
cessfully is 'joy,' when it is mostly relief. The
problem is what interests all but beginners in
typography. Its solution may be, and often is,
moderately exciting; although if the problem
is successfully solved no one perceives it has
existed. Because all persons who work realize
this, it is easier for one worker to talk to
another, however dissimilar their occupations
may be, than it is to talk with (or be talked
to by) an admirer of one's own class of work
—whose likes or dislikes are often based on
quite the wrong reasons."

The book itself is a fine example of the work
of the Merrymount Press. It is an outstanding
record of the outstanding press of its kind in
America, most aptly expressed, not only in
terms of typography but in terms of language
also.

F. A. W.

Field Notes

(Continued from page 492)

doom of winter: the stuffed crow up above,
black and sinister, from behind which comes
the fading light of an autumnal dusk; the half-
light, when ordinary objects assume a new sig-
nificance, seeming to give the bouquet a new
life that it had never had in the summer; giv-
ing the silken milkweed down a sort of phos-
phorescent glow. All this I tried to get into the
picture."

The Brooklyn Museum has received through the Egypt Exploration Fund an inlay bas-relief head of 'Smenkhara or Akhenaten made of red quartzite. This was illustrated on page 410 of the August issue. Also received were a limestone-flake portrait of Queen Nefert-iti, and a recumbent lion of the Saitic period (the largest sculptor's model known). All these are additions to the Wilbour Egyptological Collection.



A FRENCH LADY
Recent Accession at Minneapolis

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts has announced the acquisition of a terra cotta portrait bust of a lady of the period of Louis XVI by an unknown sculptor. The piece fits perfectly into the Louis XVI room at the museum. It was purchased through the Van Derlip Fund from French and Company. At one time it was in the collection of the late Mrs. William A. Soloman.

* * *

The Worcester Art Museum announces the very recent acquisition of an important Chinese Buddhist stele representing Sākya-muni with two Bodhisattvas. It is of the Northern Wei Period (386-534 A. D.). One may gain some idea from the illustrations of its æsthetic importance. (See page 490.)

LONG LIVE PUBLICITY!

ON his Saturday art page in the *Chicago Daily News*, C. J. Bulliet (June sixteenth) printed a ballot which readers might

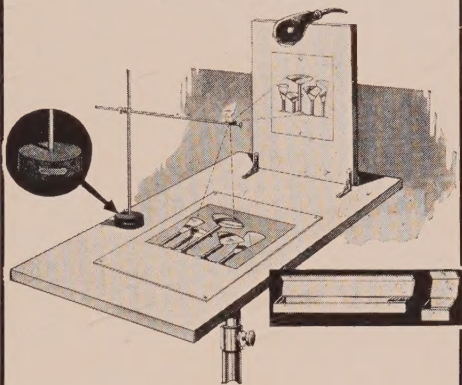
(Continued on page 500)

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Field Notes

(Continued from page 499)

fill in so that their favorite picture might be hung at the Art Institute. There were two lists of pictures suggested, one by Dr. Robert B. Harshe, the Institute's Director, the other by the *Daily News*. Dr. Harshe's list: "Lucretia" by Rembrandt, "View of Toledo" by El Greco, "The Harvesters" by Breughel, "Ado-

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For catalog write E. H. Wuerpel, Director, Room 112, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.

ration of the Kings" by Titian, and "The Bacchanale" by Bellini. The *News'* list: "The Horse Fair" by Rosa Bonheur, "Washington Crossing the Delaware" by Emanuel Leutze, "The Song of the Lark" by Jules Breton, "Oxen Going to Work" by Troyon, "Salome" by Regnault. One space was left in which the voter could substitute his own choice.

Of the lists presented one leaned to quality and the big names of all time, and the other to popular, anecdotal interest; the first was colored by the possibility that enough people had heard that the big names were great artists and their work expensive—the second was colored by familiarity in chromo reproductions and mention in casual conversation at school or at home.

Ballots appeared daily. Pictures receiving ten votes or more were retained: those surviving the first week were: "Madonna and Child with Saints" by Tiepolo, "The Song of the Lark" by Jules Breton, "Pulaski in Battle at Savannah" by Batowski, "The Horse Fair" by Rosa Bonheur, "View of Toledo" by El Greco.

The ultimate winner was "The Song of the Lark." It was unveiled on July ninth.

OCTOBER HARVEST

is the culmination of one's labors in turning the soil, planting virile seed, and careful, conscientious cultivation.

We have worked hard and long this past Spring and all this Summer, and there has been no drought. So that in comparing the next issue of "The American Magazine of Art" to the farmer's barn that has been filled to overflowing—the analogy is a true one. For in October, this magazine is greatly increased in size—a full one-third larger—and fairly crammed from cover to cover with good things. Let's have a look.

First, we find a brilliant article on *Alexander Brook*, by Ernest Brace (the second in our series on living American artists). Next, we discover how *A Physician Looks at Art*, by Benjamin F. Weems. A genuinely fine article in every respect. We believe you will read it several times.

Then, following *Wisconsin Workshop*, a discussion of a craft experiment at a college, by F. A. Gutheim, there is George Biddle's contribution, *Creative Art in Children*—telling how children grow up artistically in three cultures, and the part tradition plays.

Which brings us to *A Review of New York Gallery Shows*, *New Book Reviews*, current news from all around the country, and our regular features.

In our opinion, the following issue of "The American Magazine of Art" is the finest ever produced. We believe you will concur in this when you see it. It is our October Harvest for you!

'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.
In Poets as true genius is but rare,
True taste as seldom is the Critic's share;
Both must alike from Heav'n derive their light,
These born to judge, as well as those to write.
Let such teach others who themselves excel
And censure freely who have written well.
Authors are partial to their wit, 'tis true,
But are not Critics to their judgment, too?

ALEXANDER POPE

(An Essay on Criticism)